



April 8, 2002

Honorable Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick
Honorable City Council Members
Citizens of Detroit

Introduction

In 2001, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) of the City of Detroit conducted its first citizen satisfaction survey. The citizens were surveyed for the purpose of evaluating local government services and quality of life, and to determine usage levels for selected services provided by the City of Detroit. The citizen satisfaction survey is aligned with citywide efforts to improve accountability to citizens.

The *2001 City of Detroit Citizen Satisfaction Survey Report* is presented for your review. In the following paragraphs, I have provided a summary overview of the citizen satisfaction survey project, the role of the citizen survey in Service Efforts and Accomplishment (SEA) Reporting, and the value of the citizen satisfaction survey as a standalone report.

Role of the Citizen Survey in SEA Reporting

SEA reports help users assess the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of government and may help form a basis for voting or funding decisions. The Government Accounting Standards Board encourages governmental organizations to experiment with and report on SEA, however these disclosures are not mandatory. The SEA report supports the citywide effort to improve accountability to citizens.

The *City of Detroit Service Efforts and Accomplishments Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2001* provides information to assist City of Detroit managers and citizens in assessing agency performance. The report encapsulates information about the outputs and outcomes of the services provided by selected City agencies and the relationship between the use of resources and their outputs and outcomes. The auditors utilized the citizens' ratings, along with historical data, and data provided by comparison cities, to assess the service efforts, costs, and accomplishments of these City agencies. In the view of some performance measurement professionals, the citizen satisfaction survey provides the best measurement of a government organization's success in delivering services.

An Integrated Approach

The discrete phases in the development and execution of the City of Detroit citizen satisfaction survey were classified as survey instrument design; survey pretesting; statistical survey design; sampling plan; list service processing; data monitoring and verification; survey administration; survey responses; data analysis; demographics; and survey reporting. Several parties performed various aspects of survey development and executed various supporting tasks to conduct the citizen satisfaction survey. An overview of the process workflow, which was utilized to design, administer, analyze, and report the results of the *2001 Citizen Satisfaction Survey*, is provided below.



Survey Instrument Design

The auditors reviewed various survey instruments utilized by other municipalities, journal articles and publications related to survey research and methods, and best practices for citizen survey research, as a basis for creating the questions in the City of Detroit citizen satisfaction survey. The agency specific questions in the survey were developed from service descriptions, goals and initiatives cited in the agency budget report, and include unique services and landmarks of the City of Detroit (e.g., Belle Isle Park).

The survey consists of 90 quality of life and service satisfaction questions and 10 demographic questions. The questions were organized into 12 groups. The survey questions polled the citizens in the following areas:

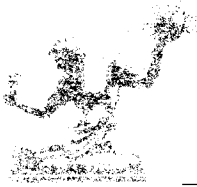
Overall Livability and Quality of Life	Quality of Recreation Services
Public Safety	Quality of Fire Department Service
Quality of Specific City Services	Quality of Transportation Services
Citizen Volunteerism to Improve Services	Quality/Effectiveness of Police Services
Usage of Specific Services and Programs	Quality of Public Lighting Services
Quality of Public Works Services	Demographics

The auditors researched various evaluative systems to select the ratings classifications for the City of Detroit survey. Based upon this research, the auditors selected the following gradients of satisfaction to evaluate city services, livability, and overall quality of life:

- Very Good
- Good
- Neither Good Nor Bad
- Bad
- Very Bad
- Don't Know

Survey Pretesting

A group of OAG employees, who were not involved in the citizen satisfaction survey project, participated in the pretesting phase of the survey. The pretesting generated some useful suggestions and feedback for the auditors, (e.g., inclusion of a neutral response in the ratings system). The survey was adjusted to incorporate some of the feedback provided by OAG employees before the surveys were mailed to citizens.



Statistical Survey Design

The geographical area of the City of Detroit is divided into 10 Neighborhood City Hall Regions¹. Each Neighborhood City Hall Region consists of a group of unique census tracts. The auditors identified the census tracts in each Neighborhood City Hall Region. They used 2000 census data to determine the population within each Neighborhood City Hall Region. The number of mailing addresses selected from each Neighborhood City Hall Region was calculated in accordance with the population of the particular Neighborhood City Hall Region and an expected 30% response rate. The auditors incorporated the historical experience of the City of Portland, Oregon within the set of assumptions utilized to formulate a conservative estimate of the survey response rate for the City of Detroit. SEA reporting was introduced in Portland, Oregon eleven years ago. In the six-year period from 1995 to 2000, the Office of the City Auditor (City of Portland) has experienced an average survey response rate of nearly 42%.

Sampling Plan

The number of surveys mailed within each Neighborhood City Hall Region was weighted in accordance with the population of the particular Neighborhood City Hall Region. The auditors assumed that a mailing of 21,511 surveys, with an expected negative adjustment of 8% (1,721 surveys) for undeliverable addresses, would yield 19,790 delivered surveys.

List Service Processing

The OAG engaged a list services firm to select a sampling technique and design and select a sample group of citizens to participate in the survey. The list processing services firm utilized the *nth* sampling method² to gather a random group of citizens from the 951,270 residents of the City of Detroit. The population figure was based upon the 2000 decennial census. Based upon the known population quantity and the desired confidence level, the auditors were able to determine the required sample size. The list services firm generated a random sample of 21,506 citizens (net of adjustment for 5 citizens due to data extraction errors). The sample group incorporated the addresses of citizens, which collectively represent approximately 99% of the census tracts in the City of Detroit.

Data Monitoring and Verification

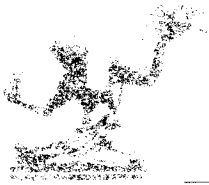
On a test basis, the auditors verified the integrity of the data provided by the list services firm. For example, the auditors utilized the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department Property Information System database to verify that addresses provided by the list services firm for inclusion in the survey mailing were within City limits. The auditors removed thirty addresses from the list services address file because they fell outside the corporate boundaries of the City.

Survey Administration

The OAG engaged a local mailing company to print the postcards and surveys. The mailing company performed the preparatory steps incident to mailing. The postcards were intended

¹ The following Neighborhood City Halls were established in the City of Detroit: Central Region; Far Northwest Region; North Central Region; Northeast Region; North-end Region; Northwest Region; Southeast Region; South Schaefer Region; Southwest Region; and West Warren Region.

² After the required sample size has been calculated, every *nth* record is selected from a list of population members.



to introduce the idea of the survey to citizens in the sample group. Over a three-day period in September 2001, postcards and surveys were delivered to 19,727 households in the City of Detroit. In the following week, the mailing company sent a reminder survey to the citizens. As of December 15, 2001, the citizens of Detroit had returned 3,378 survey responses to the auditors. The response rate for the citizen satisfaction survey was 17.12%, somewhat less than the auditors' estimated response rate of 30%. The auditors will attempt to identify the controllable factors (e.g., length of response period) and uncontrollable factors (e.g., natural reluctance of citizens to participate in surveys), for the purpose of developing a strategy to achieve a higher response rate in the next citizen satisfaction survey.

Survey Responses

The OAG engaged a communications consulting firm to scan the surveys and create a survey response database. The survey response database includes a record for each citizen survey response. The database record includes a data field for each of the 100 survey questions. The auditors utilized computer spreadsheet technology to tally the responses for each question in the survey. The subtotal responses for each Neighborhood City Hall Region and the citywide totals for each question are reported in the *Survey Results* section of this report. The auditors analyzed the responses to each question to determine the citizens' perceptions regarding various government services.

Data Analysis

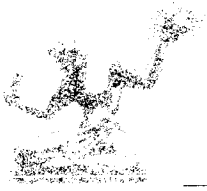
The auditors used a statistical calculator to prepare the statistical analysis of the overall group of 3,378 responses received from adult citizens in the sample group of households. The auditors' analyses included an adjustment for questions that were skipped or marked twice, and "Don't Know" type responses.

As the SEA process is refined, the OAG will evaluate the need for an adjustment for non-response bias, i.e., the difference between the demographics and opinions of respondents and non-respondents, in the statistical analysis. For the Citywide survey sample size of 3,378 respondents, the estimated sampling error (at the conventional 95% confidence level) is no more than ± 1.68 percentage points. This means that 95 out of 100 times the survey results for the population would be within ± 1.68 percentage points of the results obtained from the survey respondents. For example, 38% of the survey respondents rated the quality of life in the City of Detroit as "good". We are 95% confident that if we queried all Detroiters, we would get a response between 36.32% and 39.68% for this question.

The estimated sampling errors (at the conventional 95% confidence level) are larger than ± 1.68 percentage points for the individual Neighborhood City Hall Regions. Similarly, the estimated sampling errors for the survey questions with a lower response rate are larger than ± 1.68 percentage points due to the smaller sample sizes. The confidence intervals for the individual Neighborhood City Hall Regions range from ± 4.00 to 6.00 percentage points, depending upon the number of survey responses received per region.

Demographics

The demographic information provided by respondents in the sample should correspond to the demographic characteristics of the population. The auditors compared the demographic information provided by the respondents to the corresponding information included in the profile of general demographic characteristics (U.S. Census Bureau Report 2000) to



determine the representativeness of the citizens in the sample group to the City of Detroit populace. As a result of these comparative analyses, the auditors detected the following differences and anomalies in the sample group of respondents:

- *A disproportionate amount of female respondents were represented in the respondent group.* The relative proportion of males and females in the City of Detroit population is 47.1%, and 52.9%, respectively. However, the female respondents in the sample group exceeded the number of male respondents by an approximate ratio of 2:1. The auditors could not determine the impact of the greater number of female respondents on the survey results.
- *The largest racial groups were under-represented in the respondent group.* In absolute terms, the four racial groups (African American; Caucasian; Asian; and American Indian and Alaska Native) which constitute approximately 97% of the survey respondents are the same racial groups comprising the largest segments of the City of Detroit population. However, the relative proportions of each racial group within the actual population were not reflected in the sample group. For example, although the African American racial group represents 82.8% of the City of Detroit population, the relative proportion of African Americans in the sample group was 66.0%. In addition, 11.0% of the survey respondents represented racial groups other than the four largest groups (possibly members of one race or two races), however, construed individually, these other racial groups represent less than 1.0% of the City of Detroit population. The auditors could not determine the impact of the under-representation of the largest racial groups in the City of Detroit population on the survey results.
- *The median age group of the survey respondents was greater than the median age of the City of Detroit population.* The median age of the City of Detroit population is 30.9 years. To ensure randomness, the auditors' instructions indicated that the survey should be prepared by the adult (age 18 or older) in the household who had the most recent birthday. The median age group for the sample group of respondents was "45 - 64" years. However, the median age group of the *adult* population of the City of Detroit was not compared to the median age group of the survey respondents. The auditors could not determine the impact of not comparing the median age group of the *adult* population of the City of Detroit to the median age group of the survey respondents on the survey results.
- *The average size of the respondents' households was a bit lower than the average size of a City of Detroit household.* The average size of a City of Detroit household is 2.77 persons. The average size of the respondents' households was 2.2 persons. In the auditors' judgment, this deviation between the sample group and the population is not likely to distort the survey results.
- *The age composition of a City of Detroit household reflected both differences and similarities in relation to the age composition of the respondents' households.* The percentage of City of Detroit households with individuals under 18 years of age is 41.5%. However, the percentage of respondents' households with individuals under 18 years of age is 25%. In the auditors' judgment, this deviation between the sample group and the population does not distort the survey results, since the respondents should be at least 18 years of age. The percentage of City of Detroit households with



individuals 65 years and older is 22.8%. Similarly, the percentage of respondents' households with individuals 65 years and older is 22%. To facilitate demographic analyses, the auditors may revise the format of the age questions in the survey instrument to correspond to the format and age ranges in the *Profile of General Demographic Characteristics* (U.S. Census Bureau) report.

Survey Reporting

In general, the citywide survey results for the City of Detroit mirrored the survey results for the individual Neighborhood City Hall Regions. The data provided by the citizens is incorporated in the *City of Detroit Service Efforts and Accomplishments Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2001*. Each agency's SEA chapter includes the auditors' analyses regarding the citizen responses concerning services provided by the agency. The survey results are included in Appendix A of the *City of Detroit Service Efforts and Accomplishments Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2001*.

The survey questions, and tabulated citizen responses for each Neighborhood City Hall Region, are detailed in the *Survey Results* section of this report. The auditors acquired a wealth of information from statements provided by citizens in the *Comments* subsection of the survey. The comments ranged from security and policing issues to sentiments regarding previous mayoral administrations. The full text of 1,194 comments is grouped by agency for reporting purposes (e.g., Public Lighting Department comments). In many cases, comments provided by citizens referenced multiple City of Detroit agencies. These comments were included within the subsection for each agency specifically referenced by the citizen. For example, a comment, which included statements regarding law enforcement and streetlights, will appear within the Police Department and Public Lighting Department sections.

Conclusion

The citizen satisfaction survey provides an arena for formalized qualitative and quantitative citizen feedback and plays a large role in driving improvements and performance excellence across government agencies. The grassroots information provided by City of Detroit citizens allows agency management to study perceptions and devise service level improvements. In addition, the information allows elected officials to prioritize process improvements and investment areas based upon citizen input. My staff and I look forward to continuing to work with elected officials and agency management to find ways to improve the workload, spending, staffing, and performance results of City of Detroit agencies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph L. Harris".

Joseph L. Harris
Auditor General